

SYMBOLS OF WASHINGTON STATE



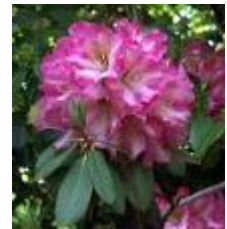
State Seal

In 1889, jeweler Charles Talcott designed our first state seal using an ink bottle, silver dollar and a postage stamp. Talcott's brother, L. Grant Talcott, lettered the words, "The Seal of the State of Washington, 1889," and another brother, G.N. Talcott, cut the printing die. More information can be found at the Secretary of State site on the State Seal.

State Flower

Coast Rhododendron

In 1892, before they had the right to vote, Washington women selected the coast rhododendron as the state flower. They wanted an official flower to enter in a floral exhibit at the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago. Six flowers were considered, but the final decision was narrowed to clover and the "rhodie," and voting booths were set up for ladies throughout the state. When the ballots were counted, the rhododendron had been chosen as the Washington state flower. In 1959, the Legislature designated the native species, *Rhododendron macrophyllum*, as the official flower of the state of Washington.



The State Flag

The state flag and the state seal are similar. Passed in 1923, Washington law describes the flag as having dark green bunting with a state seal in the center. In the late 1890s, a blue and gold military state flag with George Washington's profile on it flew over many cities and towns throughout the state. But when it came to a final decision, the current flag was adopted by the Legislature.

According to law, the flag of the United States and the flag of the state shall be prominently installed, displayed and maintained in schools, court rooms and state buildings. For further information about the state flag, check the Secretary of State's web site.



State Tree

Western Hemlock

In 1946, an Oregon newspaper teased Washington for not having a state tree. The Portland *Oregonian* picked out the western hemlock, *Tsuga heterophylla* for us, but Washington newspapers decided to choose their own and selected the popular western red cedar. State Representative George Adams of Mason County pleaded with the Legislature to adopt the western hemlock. The hemlock, he said, would become "the backbone of this state's forest industry." Adams' bill passed the Legislature and was signed into law in 1947.

State Bird

Willow Goldfinch



The goldfinch is a delicate little bird with a yellow body and black wings, and although it eventually became the official state bird, many other birds were considered for the title. In 1928, legislators let school children select the state bird and the meadowlark won hands-down. It was a nice choice but seven other states already had chosen the same bird. Another vote was taken in 1931 by the Washington

Federation of Women's Clubs. Many birds were nominated, but the goldfinch won handily over the tanager, song sparrow, junco and pileated woodpecker. Now there were two state birds and the Legislature decided to leave the final choice to school children. In 1951, children voted for the goldfinch and the Legislature made it unanimous.

State Song

"Washington, My Home"

The state song, "Washington, My Home," was written by Helen Davis, arranged by Stuart Churchill, and became the official state song in 1959. But, like the goldfinch, it had some stiff competition from another popular song. Back in 1909, "Washington Beloved" was adopted, sort of, by the Legislature. Professor Edmond Meany, the historian, wrote the words and Reginald de Koven, who also wrote "O Promise Me" and other operettas, wrote the music. But the official designation for the song was never formally introduced as a bill and so was not part of the state's code of law. When a state senator from South Bend introduced a bill in 1959 to make "Washington, My Home" our state song, it was approved unanimously.



In April, 2002, the state song was performed at the state Capitol by the Tumwater Girls' Choir, under the direction of Jack Arend, choir director.

State Fish



Steelhead Trout

The steelhead trout is an anadromous fish, meaning it returns to fresh water rivers to spawn. The scales of the steelhead shine flecks of silver with a gray spotted back from head to tail and an intensely white belly; the two colors separated by a hint of opalescent pink. Steelhead trout

is one of the most popular fish for recreational fishing, a major industry in Washington State. The steelhead trout (*Salmo gairdnerii*) was adopted by the Legislature as a state symbol in 1969.

State Gem

Petrified Wood



The geological history of our state has encompassed many great changes, one of them being the many lava flows from volcanic fissures. Centuries ago, the interior of Washington was swampy and mild with many trees such as cypress, oak, elm and ginkgo growing in wet areas. Layers of logs were preserved with

each new lava flow, and as the layers grew deeper, many of the logs became waterlogged and lay protected in deep water. Over time, water continued to seep through the lava and permeate the wood with silica. Eventually, the wood fiber was completely replaced by silica, thus petrifying many logs. The petrified wood is perfect in form and detail to the original wood. In 1975, petrified wood was adopted as the state gem. The best place to see petrified wood is the Ginkgo Petrified Forest State Park in Vantage.

State Dance

Square Dance

On April 17, 1979, the square dance became the official Washington state dance. When the pioneers came west, they brought with them a dance called the quadrille, which means square in French. The pioneers liked the simpler term and so the square dance was born. The dance is known for its series of figures and footwork. Dancers are directed by a caller. It is easy to learn, a good form of exercise, and fun.



State Folk Song

"Roll On, Columbia, Roll On"

In the early 1940s, the federal Bonneville Power Administration produced a movie encouraging rural residents in the Pacific Northwest to electrify their homes and farms with the power being generated by the newly-built Bonneville and Grand Coulee Dams on the Columbia River. As part of the project, BPA hired folksinger Woody Guthrie at \$270 for 30 days to write songs for the movie. Guthrie wrote 26 songs, the most popular of which

was "Roll On, Columbia, Roll On," an ode to the harnessing of Washington's mightiest river. It was approved as the official Washington state folk song by the Legislature in 1987.

State Fruit

Apple

Washington is the nation's top apple-producing state, so it is appropriate that the apple was named a state symbol in 1989, the centennial year. A favorite fruit around the world, the apple comes in many different colors, sizes and varieties. From the beautiful blossoms of spring, to the heavily laden branches in autumn, the apple trees of eastern Washington represent one of the largest industries in the state. The Washington apple is certainly one of the most recognized symbols of the state worldwide.



State Grass

Bluebunch Wheatgrass

Although many state symbols are readily identifiable with the western part of the state, bluebunch wheatgrass is a state symbol that is unique to eastern Washington. Bluebunch wheatgrass was a blessing to Washington's pioneer farmers and continues to play a major role in our agriculture industry today. It was adopted by the 1989 Legislature as the official state grass. Its botanical name is *Agropyron spicatum*.



State Tartan



A tartan is a design for the weaving of cloth consisting of perpendicular bands of contrasting colors on a solid background. The Washington State tartan was designed in 1988 by Vancouver, USA Country Dancers Margaret McLeod van Nus and Frank Cannonita to commemorate the Washington State Centennial celebration. It is identified by the background color green, which represents the rich forests of Washington, the "Evergreen State." The perpendicular bands of contrasting colors represent the following features: blue for the lakes, rivers and ocean; white for the snow-capped mountains; red for the apple and cherry crops; yellow for the wheat and grain crops; and black for the eruption of Mount St. Helens. The bill, designating a state tartan, was signed into law in 1991. The Council of the Scottish Tartans Society also affixed its seal to the official Certificate of Accreditation in 1991.



State Insect

Green Darner Dragonfly

In 1997, the common green darner dragonfly, *Anax junius Drury*, became Washington's official state insect after a group of students at Crestwood Elementary School in Kent brought the idea to the Legislature. Students from over 100 school districts statewide participated in the selection of the common green darner dragonfly. Also known as the "mosquito hawk," this insect can be found throughout Washington and is a beneficial contributor to the ecosystem because it consumes a large number of insect pests. It is easily recognizable by its bright green head and thorax, it has a four to six-inch wingspan and can fly 25 to 35 miles per hour. There are over 400 different species of dragonflies.

Dragonflies existed prior to the dinosaur age and some had up to a three-foot wing span. "Darner" is one family of dragonflies and the common green (*Anax junius*) was first sighted and recorded by Drury in 1773.



State Fossil

Columbian Mammoth

Following a four-year effort by students from Windsor Elementary School near Cheney to have this behemoth designated as our state fossil, the Legislature recognized in 1998 that the large, hairy prehistoric elephants of the extinct genus *Mammuthus* roamed the North American continent, including the Pacific Northwest, during the Pleistocene epoch (ice ages). Mammoth is the common name given to any member of an extinct genus *Mammuthus* of the elephant family. The first North American mammoths migrated across the Bering Strait from Asia down through Alaska about two million years ago. Nearly all

mammoths died out about 10,000 years ago. From studies based on deposits of the Columbian mammoths, *M. columbi*, it is clear that grasses featured prominently in their diets. The maximum life expectancy of the mammoth would have been 60 to 65 years. The males grew to the size of modern adult elephants; females were about half that size. Several years ago, fossils of the Columbian mammoth were found on the Olympic Peninsula.

State Marine Mammal

Orca

As a result of two years of research and persuasion by second graders from the Crescent Harbor Elementary School in Oak Harbor, the Legislature designated the orca, *Orcinus orca*, as the official marine mammal of the state of Washington in 2005. Many people visit Washington state to watch orcas; the orca is a significant symbol for the Native American culture; there are pods of orcas that migrate annually through Puget Sound; and the orca is easily recognizable because of its distinct markings. The designation is intended to promote orca awareness and to encourage protection of the natural marine habitat.



State Vegetable



In 2007, the Walla Walla sweet onion was designated as the official vegetable of the state of Washington.

The Walla Walla Sweet is from Walla Walla is only grown properly in the Walla Walla Valley. The Walla Walla Sweet finds its origins on the island of Corsica. Over a century ago, a retired French soldier found a sweet onion seed there and brought it to the Walla Walla Valley. The sweet onion had impressive winter hardiness well-suited for the climate of southeastern Washington. Soon he and other immigrants in the area began harvesting the seed. After several generations of careful hand selection, the sweet onion developed greater sweetness, size, and shape. Today, there are many

growers producing Walla Walla Sweet onions on farmland in the Walla Walla Valley. Sweet onion season is mid-June through September.

The measure was a class project for a seventh-grade honors social-studies class at Eatonville Middle School. In prior years, the bill had also been a project of a Kirkland Junior high school.

State Amphibian

Pseudacris regilla

In 2007, the Pacific chorus frog was designated as the official amphibian of the State of Washington.

Because Pacific chorus frogs live in every county in the state and on both sides of the Cascades, they are an excellent choice as an emblem for the whole state. The Pacific chorus frog is charming and makes beautiful sounds. Less than two inches long, they swell their throat sacs to three times the size of their heads to send their calls into the night. This amphibian is useful because it eats insects, including mosquitoes. It is recognizable by the black stripe through the eye to the shoulder, and can be brown, tan, grey or green. A native amphibian, it is preyed upon by bullfrogs, snakes, raccoons, shorebirds, hawks and ducks.



A third grade class at Boston Harbor Grade School in north Olympia, demonstrated excellent knowledge about the political process in making this proposal to the Legislature as the project involved science, research, art, and persuasive writing.

State Ship

Lady Washington

The legislature designated the *Lady Washington* as the official ship of the state of Washington in 2007.

Built over a two-year period and launched on March 7, 1989, the ship was built in Aberdeen by the Grays Harbor Historical Seaport Authority. Master shipwrights from all over the Pacific Northwest constructed her near the confluence of the Wishkah and Chehalis rivers. The *Lady Washington* is based in Aberdeen.

A reproduction sailing ship of the original Washington/Lady Washington that sailed during approximately 1750-1798, the vessel type is a "brig," indicating the configuration of the sails.

The Office of the Secretary of State for the state of Washington holds a mortgage on the vessel to secure the investment of the people of Washington.
(photo courtesy of Ron Arel)



--- Unofficial State Symbols ---

Some mottos and icons are understood to represent our state, even though they have never been officially adopted by the legislature.



Territorial Motto

"Al-ki" or "Alki"

Al-ki or Alki is an Indian word meaning "bye and bye." This motto first appeared on the territorial seal designed by Lt. J.K. Duncan of Gov. Stevens' surveying expedition. On one side it pictures a log cabin and an immigrant wagon with a fir forest in the background; on the other side, a sheet of water being traversed by a steamer and sailing vessel, a city in perspective; the Goddess of Hope and an anchor is in the center. The figure points at the significant word "Alki." Settlers from the schooner *Exact* named their settlement on Alki Point, New York. The new settlement was slower to grow than its East Coast counterpart, however, so the name was changed to New York-Alki, meaning "into the future" -- the 1850s version of the term "bye and bye" or, "I will see you, bye and bye."



"The Evergreen State"

On November 11, 1889, Washington became the 42nd state to enter the Union. It is the only state in the Union that is named for a president. Washington was nicknamed "The Evergreen State" by C.T. Conover, pioneer Seattle realtor and historian, for its abundant evergreen forests. The nickname has never been officially adopted.



State Capitol Building

The present state capitol building in Olympia, Washington, was first occupied by the Legislature in March 1927. The design is reminiscent of the Acropolis in Athens, Greece. It is also closest in design to the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. Although not an official state symbol, the image of this architectural structure truly represents our state government and beautiful capitol city.